OFFICE OF THE

AUDITOR GENERAL

A Guide To Policy Development

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Office of the Auditor General
MANITOBA

A Guide To Policy Development

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INTRODUCTION

This guide is in direct response to the widespread interest generated by the November 2001 report of the Office of the Auditor General of Manitoba entitled, *A Review of the Policy Development Capacity Within Government Departments*. We were contacted by various Manitoba Government policy staff seeking information on where they could find "how to" guides on policy development. Through our work in this area, we determined that there is a gap in terms of available guides to assist policy practitioners. The fundamental purpose of this guide is to promote excellence in policy development. The Guide is aimed at:

- those in a leadership or management position whose responsibilities include the policy function (see Part A); and
- policy analysts (see Parts B and C).

Guidance is provided for each of the attributes in the model of effective policy development contained in the above-mentioned November 2001 report. We have tried to provide some practical suggestions on how to handle the more challenging aspects of policy development. In this regard, we have included the perspective of some current and former cabinet ministers with respect to the role of policy options in the policy development process (**Section 6.9**). We encourage you to review that section of the Guide as it sheds light on the expectations of cabinet ministers.

By no means is this Guide the final word on policy development. Each of you has your own practical experience of what works well and what does not. Moreover, practical experience is not static. With each piece of policy work is an opportunity to refine one's approach based on previous experience.

We welcome your comments and observations on the Guide.

DEFINITIONS

Policy

In this Guide, policy refers to those plans, positions and guidelines of government which influence decisions by government (e.g., policies in support of sustainable economic development or policies to enhance access to government services by persons with disabilities). There are various types and forms of policy. Among the range of policy types are: broad policy which enunciates government-wide direction; more specific policy which may be developed for a particular sector (the economy) or issue-area (child welfare); operational policy which may guide decisions on programs, and project selection. With respect to the forms that government policy can take, it is reflected most typically in legislation, regulations, and programs. These are often referred to as policy instruments.

Policy Development

The activity of developing policy generally involves research, analysis, consultation and synthesis of information to produce recommendations. It should also involve an evaluation of options against a set of criteria used to assess each option.

Leadership And Management Positions

Throughout this Guide, a leadership/management position includes any of the following who may have policy responsibilities: deputy ministers, assistant deputy ministers, directors, executive directors, coordinators or team leaders.

Policy Analyst

Within the context of the Manitoba government, "planning and program analysts" are often engaged in policy work among other things. Likewise, much of what a legislative analyst does is essentially policy work. Also, program delivery staff may be involved in policy development. Thus the term policy analyst is used in this Guide to refer to all such staff and other positions whose duties include the activities associated with policy development described above.

Consultation

In this Guide, consultation refers to seeking input (i.e., advice, reactions, clarifications, etc.) during the policy development process from individuals within government and those external to government.

PART A – LEADING AND MANAGING POLICY DEVELOPMENT

An effective organizational environment is one that demonstrates three key attributes:

- Leadership Direction And Support,
- Human Resource Capacity,
- Infrastructure Support.

Each of these attributes is interrelated and together they form the foundation of an organization's capacity to perform. They form part of the model of effective policy development that is explained in the November 2001 report of the Office of the Auditor General of Manitoba entitled, *A Review of the Policy Development Capacity Within Government Departments* (available at www.oag.mb.ca). For more information on each of these attributes, refer to the November 2001 Report.

Part A deals with each of the above listed attributes from the perspective of what policy leaders and managers can do to facilitate organizational effectiveness in policy development.

The Following Topics Are Covered In Part A:		
Section 1: Leadership Direction and Support	Section 2: Human Resources	Section 3: Infrastructure Support
1.1 Driving and Sustaining Policy Development	2.1 Investing In People	3.1 Having The Right Tools To Do The Job
1.2 What Does Process Management Entail?	2.2 Tip On Strengthening Human Resources Capabilities	3.2 Dealing With Infrastructure Availability And Cost Issues
1.3 What Does Providing Staff With The Necessary Resources Entail?	2.3 Risks Associated With Human Resources	
1.4 What Does Product Management Entail?	2.4 Questions To Ask Yourselves In Relation To Human Resources	
1.5 Risks Associated With Not Providing Leadership Direction And Support		
1.6 Questions To Ask Yourselves In Relation To Leadership Direction And Support		

SECTION 1: LEADERSHIP DIRECTION AND SUPPORT

1.1 Driving And Sustaining Policy Development

- An important aspect of leadership direction and support is championing excellence in policy development. One of the best ways to communicate this is through:
  - process management;
  - providing staff with the necessary resources; and
  - product management (the policy paper or presentation that is generated).

1.2 What Does Process Management Entail?

Determining If Issues Are Cross-Cutting

- Increasingly, issues of the day and solutions to them are multi-faceted and multi-layered often involving more than one department, level of government or non-governmental agency. Alternatively put, policy issues are more often than not cross-cutting or have horizontal implications. Thus one of the critical strategies to successful policy development is to identify who needs to be involved in the process. Policy leaders/managers need to identify whether a particular policy issue is cross-cutting and if so, they need to ensure that the "right" people are included in the policy development process.

Assigning Suitable Resources

- Another critical aspect of leading/managing the policy process is assigning the right resources to address the policy issue at hand. Policy leaders/managers should be careful to resist the temptation of assigning whatever resources are available at the time to work on a particular issue. Within the context of stretched resources, this may mean temporarily re-assigning staff or reprioritizing work in order to achieve the best results within the necessary time frames. To effectively assign resources, leaders/managers need to:
  - be clear on the "inventory" of expertise and knowledge of their staff;
  - identify the particular mix of skills required for a given policy project; and
  - assemble the resources that most closely fit the skill set identified as required under the given circumstances.

Demanding Excellence

- Another essential ingredient to effective leadership and management of the process is the expectations that leaders/managers place on their staff. Policy leaders/manager should demand and expect excellence from policy analysts. This can be accomplished by communicating to policy analysts the expected standards in terms of the quality of the work (e.g., encouraging certain improvements from staff or challenging the rigorousness of the analysis and realism of policy options, and so forth).

- Policy analysts can benefit from opportunities to attend briefings and discussions with a department's executive and the minister (even if their attendance is

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strictly as an observer). Attending such meetings helps policy analysts to gain an understanding of their audience (those on the receiving end of their policy analysis and advice). Thus it is well worth it for policy leaders/managers to find opportunities to occasionally expose policy analysts to briefings of the executive and minister (especially more junior analysts who ordinarily would not attend such meetings).

Communicating On Critical Parameters

- Those who are in a leadership/management position need to provide policy analysts with as many "inputs" as possible that relate to the particular policy issue at hand.

Examples Of Policy "Inputs"

In order to be effective, policy analysts need to be given guidance by leaders/managers on aspects such as:

- scope of the policy exercise;
- timing requirements;
- government ideology/principles or aims to factor into the policy development exercise;
- Ministerial direction/preferences or aims;
- any directives from central government that relate to the particular policy initiative;
- resources available for the policy exercise;
- underlying assumptions; and
- requirements with respect to consultations.

Engaging The Minister Responsible

- Never assume that the minister only wants to be consulted at the latter stages of the policy development process or only at the initial stages. A minister should be given the opportunity at the outset to indicate just how involved he/she wants to be and at which stages of the process he/she wishes to be consulted. This includes obtaining the minister's input on your proposed plan for client/stakeholder consultations.

Determining When It Is Appropriate To Involve Program Staff

- It is a good idea to involve program staff in the policy development process. There are several reasons for doing this. First, program staff can be instrumental in helping to properly define the problem/issue. Second, because program staff are in the "front lines" so to speak, they can help to identify key persons to consult, and more importantly, can advise on the suitability of the method of consultation for particular stakeholder/client groups. Third, bearing in mind that policy is frequently implemented through programs, being conscious of program implementation considerations during the policy development stages can strengthen the quality of the policy proposals put forward.

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1.3 What Does Providing Staff With The Necessary Resources Entail?

- Providing policy analysts with resources does not simply mean allocating more manpower to get the job done. Allocating more staff or more time to a particular policy exercise may not always be feasible. Resources in this context include other aspects as identified in the accompanying box.

Examples Of Resources For Policy Analysts

In order to be effective, policy staff need access to resources such as:

- Opportunities to be current in their policy field and to expand their subject knowledge.
- Opportunities to enhance skills (e.g., in assessing policy options, in conducting post policy implementation evaluations, in consultation processes, data analysis and computer manipulation techniques).
- Networking opportunities both within government and externally (e.g., through inter-departmental and inter-governmental policy forums, external research groups/think tanks, etc.).
- The appropriate infrastructure (**Section 3**).

- Leads/managers should keep in mind that giving staff access to the types of resources identified above is one way to demonstrate to them senior management's commitment to excellence in policy development.

- Additionally, policy leaders/managers need to set the priorities and trade-offs for policy analysts. This is one way to address time constraints.

1.4 What Does Product Management Entail?

- This aspect is dealt with in **Part C**. Suffice it to say here that the benefits of the best process in the world can be lost if the results of the process are not effectively communicated. Those involved in leading and managing the process must ensure effective communication in providing written or oral policy advice.

Effective Communication

- Effective communication is using plain English, knowing what to highlight, and being conscious of the fact that those on the receiving end of policy advice (whether in written or oral form) are generally not going to be conversant with the subject matter. This is a critical point that cannot be over emphasized. All too often, the policy product fails to take into account that the audience is not an expert in this field. Those involved in leading the policy process need to review policy products to ensure that they meet the criteria in **Part C**.

1.5 Risks Associated With Not Providing Leadership Direction And Support

- The risks associated with not providing leadership direction and support are:
  - untimely response to policy requests;
  - staff with limited understanding of the dimensions of the issue/problem due to lack of contact with external organizations, lack of data, limited or poor communication from leaders/managers regarding direction from government, etc.;

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- inaccuracies in presentation of facts;
- clarity and conciseness of policy documents may be compromised;
- limited creativity and innovation in policy response; and
- that good policy analysts may leave.

1.6 Questions To Ask Yourselves In Relation To Leadership Direction And Support

- As the leaders/managers, have we done all that we can to demonstrate to policy analysts on an on-going basis that we expect and are committed to a high standard of policy development?

- As leaders/managers, have we rewarded effective performance? In this regard, money or time-off are not the only rewards. There are several other ways to reward a job well done including: acknowledging staff's role and contribution in front of senior officials/other departmental staff; professional development opportunities; conferences; taking staff to "high-level" meetings.

- As leaders/managers, have we reviewed the policy product to ensure that it meets the criteria of effective communication presented in **Part C**?

SECTION 2: HUMAN RESOURCES

2.1 Investing In People

- The ability to respond to continuous demand for policy advice may not always depend on having more staff. Moreover, due to fiscal constraints, it may not be feasible to hire more staff. While sufficiency of staff may sometimes be an issue, there is also the question of whether existing human resources are as skilled as they could be to carry out policy development as efficiently and effectively as possible. The more proficient a person is at something, the less time it takes to get the job done. Thus it is of strategic importance to invest in existing staff resources to strengthen their capacity to effectively and efficiently meet the level of policy demand.

2.2 Tip On Strengthening Human Resources Capabilities

Tip ☞ Leaders/managers can initiate the development of a survey instrument to be used to survey policy analysts on areas where they believe training would be of benefit to them. After identifying training needs, leaders/managers should demonstrate their commitment to investing in staff by preparing a plan for implementing training. To reflect financial constraints, it may be necessary to explore various options for providing training and to also develop a long-range schedule of who will be sent for training in which year.

2.3 Risks Associated With Human Resources

- The risks associated with not having policy analysts who possess the appropriate competencies are:
  - poor quality policy advice;
  - poor quality of policy product;
  - untimely response due to limited competencies.

2.4 Questions To Ask Yourselves In Relation To Human Resources

- Does our department know the strengths and weaknesses of its policy analysts?
- Do leaders/managers in the department have a plan to address training and professional needs of policy analysts?
- Are leaders/managers in the department doing all they can to demonstrate a commitment to building excellence in their policy analysts?
- Are leaders/managers rewarding excellence?

SECTION 3: INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT

3.1 Having The Right Tools To Do The Job

- Leadership support also needs to extend to ensuring that policy analysts have access to the resources they need such as:
  - information technology (including software programs that facilitate analysis, modeling and forecasting, etc.);
  - various databases;
  - purchase of research or consultant studies; and
  - exposure to decision-making and discussions at senior levels.

- One of the biggest challenges is with data. Sometimes the data one wants has not been compiled. At other times, it exists in a form that is not suitable for one's purpose without adjustment or manipulation (e.g., the level of aggregation, the geographic boundaries, or the data elements included in a statistic). Collecting previously uncollected data or making adjustments to existing data is often costly and time consuming. In some cases, it won't be possible to create the desired data within the time frames of a given policy exercise. Challenges such as these need to be identified and reported on, and a strategy for dealing with them needs to be put in place. See **Section 3.2**.

3.2 Dealing With Infrastructure Availability And Cost Issues

- Identify and share the problem. This is one way to gain leverage for the necessary resources to obtain the required infrastructure. Remember, be strategic (i.e., be selective about which items you put your efforts towards obtaining and build a solid case). The example that follows illustrates how you might approach this.

Identifying Infrastructure Needs

Using data availability as an example, leaders/managers could initiate a process whereby policy analysts are asked to do the following:

- Identify as clearly as possible the data gap.
- Identify why this data is important (i.e., is it important in relation to one particular policy project, a few policy areas the department is responsible for or does it have widespread application in the department's policy development)?
- Identify what it would take to gather the data (i.e., will staff do it, will a consultant need to be hired, will an external agency provide it, what is the cost)?
- Identify what is the impact of not obtaining the data (i.e., risks)?

Once the above information is gathered, leaders/managers should ensure that the documented data problem is communicated "up the ladder". One way to do this is to include it in your policy products (data gaps potentially affect the ability to provide adequate evidence and analysis of problems/issues as well as the assessment of options). Policy decision-makers need to be aware of the basis on which they are making those decisions.

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- Avoid an ad hoc approach to determining gaps and more importantly, prioritize among competing infrastructure needs. To do this, use the set of questions above, to undertake a comprehensive scan of the policy infrastructure to determine all the gaps and compile your findings in one report that is shared with the executive as well as the minister(s).

3.3 Risks Associated With Not Having Infrastructure Support

- The risks associated with not having access to the right type of infrastructure tools are:
  - decision-making is not evidence based;
  - poor understanding of the dimensions of the issue/problem potentially leading to misdirection of funds; and
  - staff have limited means of keeping current on issues and trends thereby limiting their capacity as policy advisors.

3.4 Questions To Ask Yourselves In Relation To Infrastructure Support

- Are we clear on our infrastructure gaps whether they be software, data, research, or others?

- Have leaders/managers asked policy analysts to identify and communicate to them the infrastructure gaps?

- Have we developed a concrete plan for how we will systematically address the gaps (the specific items, their cost, level of priority and schedule for implementation? See **Section 3.2.**

- Does the department flag data and other infrastructure gaps in policy products in order to ensure that decision-makers are fully aware of the basis on which they are making decisions?

PART B – POLICY PROCESS ATTRIBUTES

The process of developing public policy is an activity that generally involves research, analysis, consultation and synthesis of information to produce recommendations. It should involve an evaluation of options against a set of criteria used to assess each option. An effective policy process is one that is generally characterized by the following five attributes:

- Issue Identification
- Issue Analysis
- Generating Solutions
- Consultation
- Performance Monitoring

These attributes form part of the model of effective policy development that is explained in the November 2001 report of the Office of the Auditor General of Manitoba entitled, *A Review of the Policy Development Capacity Within Government Departments* (available at www.oag.mb.ca).

Part B deals with each of the above listed attributes in terms of how to go about putting them into practice. Keep in mind as you read this guide that policy development is not a linear process with each step being completed before the next one begins. On the contrary, the process is iterative and dynamic with the various steps feeding into each other (refer to the above-mentioned November 2001 Report for more information on this point).

Before we deal with each of the attributes in the model, we begin by framing the discussion with a word about the importance of communication from policy analysts to policy leaders/managers throughout the policy process.

Communication With Management

An effective policy process is one that includes two-way communication between policy leaders/managers and policy analysts. Thus, as a policy analyst, don't hesitate to identify where management "input" is needed. Don't always wait for management to come to you. When policy analysts find that there are gaps in the "inputs" they should seek clarification or additional information from those who are leading the process (see top of page 7 for what is meant by "inputs"). Policy analysts are intimately involved in carrying out the policy process and so they are often in a position to identify those areas where they require direction, input or decisions from management in order to effectively move through the different stages of the process. In fact, policy leaders/managers are relying on policy analysts to identify their needs during the policy process and more importantly, to advise and consult them at key junctures.

Likewise, policy analysts should keep in mind the saying, "you'll never know unless you ask"! This means, don't always wait for policy leaders/managers to identify or offer resources. Identify for leaders/managers the resources you believe are necessary for you to enhance your capabilities in policy development. There may be times when you will be in the best position to identify the resources you would like to have access to in order to be more effective.

The Following Topics Are Covered In Part B:		
Section 4: Issue Identification	Section 5: Issue Analysis	Section 6: Generating Solutions
4.1 Defining The Problem/Issue	5.1 Understanding The Problem	6.1 The Main Ingredients To Successfully Generating And Assessing Options
4.2 Getting The Diagnosis Right Is Key	5.2 Comparative Data And Analysis	6.2 A Conceptual Framework
4.3 Tip On How To Tell If It's A Symptom Or A Problem	5.3 Types Of Comparative Data	6.3 Tip On Distinguishing Working Parameters From Principles/Values
4.4 Risks Associated With Misdiagnosing The Problem	5.4 Tip On Situating The Problem Within A Context	6.4 Identifying Expected Outcomes
4.5 Questions To Ask Yourselves In The Process Of Clarifying The Problem	5.5 Risks Associated With Insufficient Analysis Of Issues	6.5 What If A Conceptual Framework And Outcomes Is Not Forthcoming?
	5.6 Questions To Ask Yourselves In The Process Of Issue Analysis	6.6 Distinguishing Policy Options From Policy Implementation Options
		6.7 Determining The Pros And Cons
		6.8 General Assessment Criteria
		6.9 Perspective Of Cabinet Ministers On The Development Of Policy Options
		6.10 Risks Associated With Not Generating Policy Options
		6.11 Questions To Ask Yourselves In The Process Of Generating Policy Options
Section 7: Consultation	Section 8: Performance Measurement	
7.1 The Who, What, When, Where, Why And How Of Consultation	8.1 Why Bother?	8.6 The Challenge Of Selecting Performance Indicators
7.2 A Consultation Check List	8.2 Making Performance Measurement An Integral Part Of The Process	8.7 Risks Associated With Not Monitoring And Evaluating Policies
7.3 Tips On Getting The Most Out Of Consultations	8.3 Measuring The Performance Of A Policy	8.8 Questions To Ask Yourselves In Relation To Performance Measurement
7.4 Risks Associated With Not Getting The Consultations Right	8.4 Tips On How To Manage Policy Evaluation With Limited Resources	
7.5 Questions To Ask Yourselves In Relation To Consultations	8.5 Criteria For Determining Which Policies To Monitor And Evaluate	

SECTION 4: ISSUE IDENTIFICATION

4.1 Defining The Problem/Issue

- How one understands and defines a problem affects the policy solutions put forward to address the issue(s). It is therefore critical to properly diagnose the problem.

- To clearly define the problem, one has to distinguish the symptoms or effects of a problem from the actual problem. The examples below illustrate the difference between describing an existing situation (symptoms) and tracing what is occurring back to its root cause to identify the actual problem.

4.2 Getting The Diagnosis Right Is Key

Example
A person complains to their doctor that they are suffering from watery eyes and a stuffed up nose. These are symptoms and not the problem. These symptoms could mean the problem is: an allergy, the flu, a cold, a reaction to dust or any number of other potential ailments. Getting the diagnosis right (i.e., getting the problem right) is essential to effective treatment.

Example
An employee survey shows that employees are not entirely clear on procedures to follow in relation to a particular task. The above symptom could mean the problem is any of the following: inadequate communication from management on procedures, conflicting procedures, difficult to understand procedures, under qualified staff. Depending on which one of these is identified as the problem(s), the solution would be quite different.

Example
School grades are declining. This may be a symptom of any number of issues such as: an unstable home environment or malnutrition, both of which can affect ability to concentrate; a reflection of teachers' skills; or the curriculum has changed to more challenging expectations of students. If the conclusion is that the issues are socio/economic in nature the potential solution shifts from an education based response to a social services based response or depending on the circumstances, to a combination of educational and social policy initiatives.

4.3 *Tip On How To Tell If It's A Symptom Or A Problem*

Tip ☞

Symptoms describe **What**	• Housing condition is in decline; vacant and boarded up housing is on the increase; real estate sales in the neighbourhood have declined.
Causes describe **Why**	• Vandalism, absentee landlords, low income households cannot afford repairs, neighbourhood perceived as unsafe.
Policy addresses **Why**	• The causes and not the symptoms.

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A person complains to their doctor that they are suffering from watery eyes and a stuffed up nose. These are symptoms and not the problem. These symptoms could mean the problem is: an allergy, the flu, a cold, a reaction to dust or any number of other potential ailments. Getting the diagnosis right (i.e., getting the problem right) is essential to effective treatment.

Example
An employee survey shows that employees are not entirely clear on procedures to follow in relation to a particular task. The above symptom could mean the problem is any of the following: inadequate communication from management on procedures, conflicting procedures, difficult to understand procedures, under qualified staff. Depending on which one of these is identified as the problem(s), the solution would be quite different.

Example
School grades are declining. This may be a symptom of any number of issues such as: an unstable home environment or malnutrition, both of which can affect ability to concentrate; a reflection of teachers' skills; or the curriculum has changed to more challenging expectations of students. If the conclusion is that the issues are socio/economic in nature the potential solution shifts from an education based response to a social services based response or depending on the circumstances, to a combination of educational and social policy initiatives.

4.3 *Tip On How To Tell If It's A Symptom Or A Problem*

Tip ☞

Symptoms describe **What**	• Housing condition is in decline; vacant and boarded up housing is on the increase; real estate sales in the neighbourhood have declined.
Causes describe **Why**	• Vandalism, absentee landlords, low income households cannot afford repairs, neighbourhood perceived as unsafe.
Policy addresses **Why**	• The causes and not the symptoms.

4.4 Risks Associated With Misdiagnosing The Problem

- The main risks associated with not clearly defining the problem are:
  - not targeting the right problem; and
  - misallocation of resources.

4.5 Questions To Ask Yourselves In The Process Of Clarifying The Problem

- What does the situation that is presenting itself ultimately *reflect*? See **Section 4.3**.

- Have we drilled down far enough to get to the causes of the problem?

- Have we defined the problem clearly enough to give focus and direction to the process of developing options to address the problem? For instance, it would not be sufficient to define a problem by saying, "socio/economic problems are affecting the scholastic performance of school children". This would not give adequate guidance on where to turn in exploring policy options.

- Have we defined the problem in such a way that we can track changes over time once the selected policy solution is implemented? Part of clearly defining the problem includes describing in qualitative and quantitative terms such aspects as how often the problem occurs, when it occurs, its impact when it occurs, etc.

- Having defined the problem, did we also identify what the desired state is (i.e., the outcome sought)? This question is closely related to the previous question. To know if the problem is abating, one has to have a sense of the preferred state in order to be able to measure progress in relation to the desired outcome.

SECTION 5: ISSUE ANALYSIS

5.1 Understanding The Problem

- Keep in mind that the steps in the policy development process do not happen as separate discreet steps. Rather the process is generally iterative and the steps in the process are inter-related and inter-dependent. Thus, issue analysis is inseparable from problem definition. In fact, the two steps inform each other and there is a back and forth flow between these two steps. The more one analyzes the issues the more clearly one can define and *refine* the definition of the problem.

- The aim of analysis of the problem is to *understand* it.

- Often a problem involves a number of concerns and is multi-dimensional. As a policy analyst you have to identify the key dimensions of a problem.

- Analyze the problem from different perspectives (understand the environment in which the problem is occurring, understand stakeholder/client perspectives, etc.). Doing so enables you to get a handle on its multi-dimensional nature.

5.2 Comparative Data And Analysis

- One useful way to gain an understanding of the problem is to understand it in relative terms – relative to other similar situations and contexts. For instance, if student grades are noticeably declining in a particular school division, is there a similar trend in other divisions? If the decline in grades is limited to certain school divisions, what is different between those divisions where there is a decline and those where there is not? This type of comparative analysis can be useful in zeroing in on the precise nature of the problem.

- Gathering comparative data is also useful as a way to find out how the problem may have been handled elsewhere. It is especially important to find out how solutions to the problem have worked elsewhere. The latter is important in the next step that relates to generating solutions.

- Don't collect comparative data just for the sake of doing it! Comparative data is only meaningful if you do something with it. So once you have comparative data, analyze it by asking yourself, "so what, how does this influence my understanding of the what and the why of the problem we are facing here"? See **Sections 4.2** and **4.3**.

- Time pressures, data availability, and cost of data in some cases will impact on your ability to collect and analyze what you may ideally want to be able to access. Be selective and strategic in what you choose to collect. Ask yourself, what would be the most useful investment of time in data collection given the various constraints we may be facing.

5.3 Types Of Comparative Data

Example

Depending on the policy issue you are dealing with, here are some types of comparisons that can be helpful in the process of trying to understand the dimensions of the problem:

- trends at other similar locations within your jurisdiction (between neighbourhoods, districts, communities, ecological areas, sectors, etc.)
- trends in other Canadian jurisdictions;
- data on national averages;
- data on city-wide averages;
- historical data (which may point to cyclical trends; or may lead the analyst to see that the current situation did not always prevail thereby leading the analyst to "drill down" further to determine what events/conditions have produced the present situation – understanding this can help in directing you to the potential solutions to the problem);
- international trends.

5.4 *Tip On Situating The Problem Within A Context*

Tip ☞ Context can often explain the "why" of the problem. A problem does not suddenly pop up onto the landscape. You need to understand the landscape in which the problem lives in order to fully grasp the dimensions and scope of the problem (e.g., doing an environmental scan).

Tip ☞ Find out about the relevant trends that are impacting on the symptoms that are manifesting. As with comparative data, when collecting background contextual or historical information, ask yourself, "so what, how is any of this information helping me to gain an understanding of the issues and what clues is this information giving me about potential remedies"?

5.5 Risks Associated With Insufficient Analysis of Issues

- The main risks associated with not properly analyzing the issues are:
  - unreliable basis from which to develop policies;
  - decision-making that is not evidence based; and
  - policies that have not worked well in other jurisdictions/similar contexts may be repeated unknowingly.

5.6 Questions To Ask Yourselves In The Process Of Issue Analysis

- Have we explored the problem from different angles? This means having an understanding of the issues, as various key interests perceive them (see also **Section 7** on Consultation).

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5.6 Questions To Ask Yourselves In The Process Of Issue Analysis

- Have we explored the problem from different angles? This means having an understanding of the issues, as various key interests perceive them (see also **Section 7** on Consultation).

- Do we have an understanding of the problem in terms of its scope? This means obtaining quantitative and qualitative data to substantiate that there is a problem. (e.g., it is not enough to say, "housing quality is declining in a particular neighbourhood and there is a fair amount of turnover in the housing market"). One needs to know the number of dwellings in decline and the rate of turnover.

- Have you obtained comparative data wherever feasible? More importantly, how are you using that information in the policy development process? How has it affected your thinking about the problem? How can the information be used in the decision-making process?

- Have you examined the context in which the problem is manifesting? More importantly, how are you using that information in the policy development process? How has it affected your thinking about the problem? How can the information be used in the decision-making process?

SECTION 6: GENERATING SOLUTIONS

6.1 The Main Ingredients To Successfully Generating And Assessing Options

- There are two critical ingredients that can assist the process not only of identifying potential solutions but as well, the process of evaluating those potential solutions:
  - having a conceptual framework that will guide the process of generating and assessing various potential solutions to the problem; and
  - having a clear sense of the desired outcomes or goals that the selected policy is expected to achieve.

6.2 A Conceptual Framework

- A conceptual framework is the underpinning that should drive the selection of policy options to be assessed. Such a framework should consist of:
  - the main working parameters (i.e., the "givens" or the limitations within which you are working);
  - key principles/values;
  - government/ministerial goals and priorities.

- As early as possible in the process of policy development, policy analysts need to obtain confirmation from the person directing or co-ordinating the policy development process on the above elements that will guide the generation and assessment of policy options.

6.3 Tip On Distinguishing Working Parameters From Principles/Values

- Here are some examples that capture the difference between a working parameter and a principle/value:

Tip ☞

Examples of Working Parameters

- That the policy selected has to be one that can be implemented within the framework of existing legislation.
- That the policy selected has to be one that will not require renegotiations or amendments to an existing tri-level agreement.
- That no new funding requirements will result from the selected policy, but reallocations of existing resources may be considered.
- That the policy selected is endorsed by a particular client group or stakeholder group.
- That the policy selected must contribute to government's priority or directives in a particular area.
- That the policy selected will have a cost neutral impact on households.

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Tip ☞

Examples of Principles/Values

- That citizens have a right to universal health care.
- That every child should have access to a safe living environment.
- That all households should have clean drinking water.
- Environmental protection must guide development decisions.
- Affordable housing is an entitlement of citizens.
- That local government autonomy should be enhanced.
- That government accountability to its residents needs to be advanced.

- It should be noted that there is a fine line between the principles/values and the actual policy. Sometimes the principles/values become the policy.

6.4 Identifying Expected Outcomes

- It is not enough to describe a problem in qualitative and quantitative terms. However good the definition of the problem is, the question remains, "where does one want to end up"? If a policy is put in place or an existing policy is modified to address particular issues, what type of change is expected to occur through the policy and roughly when is change expected to be visible?

- Identifying the desired outcome at the outset is not only crucial for the performance measurement step in the process (see **Section 8**), but also for framing the assessment of the potential policy options. Thus each option is assessed in relation to its potential to meet expected outcomes.

- On a continuum, there are three levels of outcomes: immediate, intermediate and long term outcomes. See the side bar for an illustrative example. The more specific you can be about expected outcomes, the easier it is to determine the relative merits and limitations of each policy option.

OUTCOME

A significant consequence attributed to the outputs of an organization, policy, program or initiative. Outcomes may relate to a change in behaviour, skills, knowledge, attitudes, values, conditions, status or other attributes. Outcomes may be described as: immediate, intermediate or long term; direct or indirect; intended or unintended. For example, a program to enforce discharge in waterways could have the following immediate, intermediate and long term outcomes:

Immediate Outcome:
- pollutant discharges are reduced;

Intermediate Outcome:
- reduced fish and human diseases;

Long Term Outcome:
- improved water quality.

6.5 What If A Conceptual Framework And Outcomes Is Not Forthcoming?

- What do policy analysts do when they are unable to obtain from senior officials and/or ministers/cabinet confirmation on a conceptual framework and outcomes? The purpose of this resource guide is to provide a tool that outlines what would constitute effective practices in policy development. Within such a framework, it is recognized that under certain circumstances, a policy analyst may have limited influence over the policy development process. The responsibility of policy analyst is to have *attempted* to undertake the best possible process knowing that such attempts may not always yield an optimal response or reaction.

6.6 Distinguishing Policy Options From Policy Implementation Options

- There is a difference between policy options and policy implementation options. One has to begin the policy development process by putting forward policy options and obtaining agreement from ministers/cabinet on the policy direction. The second step is to explore options for implementing a given policy. Sometimes these two very different exercises will be done as separate steps, while at other times they will be combined (e.g., the policy options and implementation options can be considered and presented together). Whether policy options and policy implementation strategies are dealt with together or separately, the key here is that policy needs to frame the exercise of coming up with implementation options. Jumping right to policy implementation options one runs the risk of not being sure if one is addressing the actual problem or only the symptoms. Developing implementation options without having received direction on the desired policy is to put in place programs or initiatives in the absence of a clear understanding of why something is being done (i.e., the underlying objective).

- Here are some examples of policy options versus implementation options:

Tip ☞

Examples Of Policy Options

- To foster small business development.
- To foster innovation in small business development.
- To stimulate research and development in small business technologies.
- To stimulate employment growth in the small business sector.

Examples Of Policy Implementation Options

For each policy option identified above, there could be several alternative approaches to implementing the policy. Taking the first policy above, some examples of implementation options might be:

- Providing a loans program for new small businesses;
- Providing loan guarantees for new small businesses;
- Funding re-training for persons interested in working in certain small business sectors;
- Providing seed money for feasibility studies and business plan development for potential new small businesses.

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6.7 Determining The Pros And Cons Of Options

- The pros and cons of each policy option should be determined in relation to a set of criteria. Each policy option should be systematically evaluated against each of the criteria.

- The criteria selected will vary depending on the problem/issue at hand.

6.8 General Assessment Criteria

Some fairly typical criteria that tend to apply in most policy development contexts include factors such as:

- How well the policy option meets the conceptual framework (see **Section 6.2**);
- time frame for implementation of a policy option;
- impact of a policy option on clients/stakeholders;
- potential adverse impacts of a policy (i.e., in fixing one problem, is another one created or is another existing problem made worse);
- reaction of clients/stakeholders to policy option;
- cost implications;
- administrative ease of implementation of a policy option;
- legal considerations;
- inter-departmental impact (many problems are cross-cutting – i.e., the policy response may affect the work of other departments and/or the policy response may have to come from a cluster of inter-related departments);
- degree to which a policy option is consistent with other relevant government policies, procedures and regulations;
- potential risks (worst case scenario) associated with a policy option and actions that could be taken to deal with the potential adverse impact.

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- degree to which a policy option is consistent with other relevant government policies, procedures and regulations;
- potential risks (worst case scenario) associated with a policy option and actions that could be taken to deal with the potential adverse impact.

6.9 *Perspective Of Cabinet Ministers On The Development Of Policy Options*

- *Some policy analysts believe that a minister would not be interested in knowing about alternative approaches and the pros and cons of those approaches if he or she has already stated their policy preference. Moreover, some policy analysts believe that a minister would not want a critique of the policy response that he or she is proposing. We canvassed some current and former cabinet ministers to obtain their perspective on policy options. Below is a synopsis of the main messages they communicated to us on the question of policy options.*

Give Us Options

- *The response we received from them was that professionalism in policy development includes not only putting forth policy alternatives, but also alerting a minister/cabinet to the pros and cons of the policy options even in the case of an option favoured by a minister/cabinet. It was pointed out that to do otherwise is to put government at risk of being blind-sided. Ministers also noted that just because political decisions may sometimes be counter to the administration's recommendations is no justification for staff not to explore policy options and to communicate their merits and potential limitations or risks.*

Don't Tell Us What You Think We Want To Hear

- *Ministers noted that they do not want staff to tell them what they perceive a ministers want to hear. They pointed out that they want to know the facts before they make their final decision and that they rely on the administration to communicate any issues or pitfalls they foresee with a particular course of action even if it is favoured by a minister.*

Ask, Don't Assume

- *Ministers told us that they want staff to ask them when in doubt about whether a minister wants options developed. Likewise, it was pointed out that sometimes the administration assumes that certain options would be rejected outright by certain governments on grounds of ideology. Here again, ministers suggested that rather than making that assumption, staff should have a discussion with the minister early on in the process in order to find out a minister's/cabinet's philosophy, direction and inclination. The point was made that asking questions and seeking clarification at the front-end can save a lot of time for those involved in the policy development process including ministers/cabinet.*

Stay Current On Policy Options

- *Ministers expect policy analyst to be current in their field and to know about the latest thinking and approaches in a given policy field. They rely on them to bring forward cutting-edge policy responses to policy problems.*

6.10 Risks Associated With Not Generating Policy Options

Risks In The Absence of A Clear Framework to Guide Option Assessment

- The main risks associated with not having a clear conceptual framework and policy outcomes are:
  - uncertainty as to whether government's or a department's values and priorities are being furthered by a given policy; and
  - not knowing what a policy is intended to achieve.

Risks Associated With Not Developing And Assessing Policy Options

- The main risks associated with not developing policy options are:
  - The policy selected my not be the best one to meet government or departmental priorities; and
  - the policy selected may not be the most effective and efficient.

6.11 Questions To Ask Yourselves In The Process Of Generating Policy Options

- Did we *attempt* to obtain endorsement or approval in principle from at least the deputy minister if not the minister and/or the relevant committee of Cabinet (if applicable) on the conceptual framework and the proposed desired outcome/goal that will serve as the basis for selecting options to consider? (It is not effective use of a policy analyst's time and resources to generate potential options based on a set of assumptions that senior government officials do not support; see **Sections 6.2 and 6.4**).

- Did we evaluate each option using a common set of criteria? See **Section 6.8.**

SECTION 7: CONSULTATION

7.1 The Who, What, When, Where, Why And How Of Consultation

- An important step in the policy development process is deciding on the best approach to consultation. When it comes to consultation, there is not a one size fits all circumstances. Consultation has to be tailored to meet: the time frames, resource availability and nature of the policy issue(s) at hand.

7.2 A Consultation Check List

Who	• Determining who needs to be consulted: other departments, one's minister, other ministers, other levels of government, other jurisdictions, committees of Cabinet, various external client/stakeholder groups, general public?
What	• What should be the subject matter of the consultation? Whether to consult on issue identification, the range of options, the preferred options, the assumptions, the principles, the outcomes, etc.?
When	• Determining the timing of consultations and when you have consulted enough – i.e., when to end the consultations. Should it take place during the preliminary information gathering stage when you are trying to get a handle on the nature of the problem? Should one wait until there is some internal coalescing around the principles and expected outcomes that will guide the process? Should it be at each step in the process? Should some individuals/groups be consulted at some stages in the process and others consulted at other phases of the policy development process?
Where	• At which location(s) should consultation take place? Is it more appropriate to consult some individuals/groups at certain locations and other individuals/groups at different venues?
Why	• Why does a particular individual, department or group need to be consulted? What type of exchange is one hoping to have with each person/group? Is the purpose of the consultation to gather information, to obtain feedback/reaction? Is it that through the consultation there is also the aim of disseminating information? Answering why makes you aware of what you want to get out of the consultation and helps shape the "how" and "where" of consultation.
How	• Determining the best methods for consultation. Should one hold workshops, round table discussions, public meetings? Should the internet be used to disseminate information on the policy review and as a way to solicit feedback? Should a discussion paper be released? Should sub-groupings of clients/stakeholders be brought together for consultations? Cost is often a consideration in such choices and decision. See **Section 7.5**.

7.3 Tips On Getting The Most Out Of Consultations

Tip ☞ Use the Consultation Checklist (see **Section 7.2**) to help you develop a proposed consultation plan that you believe is the best fit given the particular circumstances you are working under. The consultation plan can also be a tool to facilitate discussion and endorsement by whomever is directing or coordinating the policy initiative as well as any other officials who's endorsement is required.

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Tip ☞ As a general rule, consultations within the organization (in this case, internal to government) should precede external consultations. Failure to consult internally at the outset can often cause resistance and other difficulties in the policy development process. In particular, do not overlook inter-departmental consultations on problems/issues that cut across more than one department.

Tip ☞ Part of consultation is also about informing people with respect to what is going on and how it may possibly impact them. This is especially true when it comes to letting other departments/central government know what may be in the works.

Tip ☞ Follow-up your consultations with a thank you letter that tells them that you will advise them of the outcome of their input. Letting clients/stakeholders know how their input was used including an explanation of why their suggestions were not implemented if that is the case is important to fostering positive on-going relations with them in future.

7.4 Risks Associated With Not Getting The Consultations Right

- The risks associated with not undertaking consultations, limited consultations or a poor consultation process are:
  - limited understanding of the problems/issues leading to poor policy solutions;
  - negative back-lash from client/stakeholder in reaction to a policy;
  - lack of policy co-ordination; and
  - potential misdirection of funds.

7.5 Questions To Ask Yourselves In Relation To Consultations

- Have we identified the who, what, when, where, why and how of the consultations? See **Section 7.2.**

- Is the proposed approach to consultations realistic within the time frame available for this particular policy development exercise?

- Is the proposed consultation process realistic given the resources that are available?
  - What will it cost?
  - How much staff time will it require?
  - What type of expertise will it require (e.g., will you need a web page to be developed, workshop facilitators, simultaneous translation services at a public meeting, etc.)?
  - Which skills do we have in-house and which ones need to be out-sourced?

- Have we identified the potential fall-out of having to launch a scaled back consultation process?

SECTION 8: PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

8.1 Why Bother?

- In our report entitled, *A Review Of The Policy Development Capacity Within Government Departments*, we noted that the prevalent view within Manitoba Government departments with respect to monitoring and evaluating the performance of policies is that:
  - it is too time consuming and costly;
  - it is not the best use of already stretched policy resources; and
  - client/stakeholder reaction and feedback will drive the need to change policies or introduce new ones.

- The performance measurement constraints that departments pointed out need to be contended with and a realistic approach to performance measurement needs to be found.

- In the absence of information on how previous policies have worked, policy development can become an exercise in shooting in the dark and perpetuation of policy approaches that may not be working.

- One may be lulled into a false sense of security by relying on complaints or feedback from clients/stakeholders as a form of performance measurement or as drivers of when to undertake performance reviews.

- It is equally worthwhile to know when a policy or group of inter-related policies is performing well. Knowing what works contributes as much if not more to future decision-making, especially when it comes to defending the value of programs funded in support of certain policy objectives.

8.2 Making Performance Measurement An Integral Part Of The Process

- Performance measurement should not be handled as an after thought to the policy development process; it needs to be an integral part of the process because reflecting on performance measurement at the beginning also helps in refining one's thinking with respect to the expected outcomes. So beyond determining whether the proposed policies will be evaluated, you need to also give some thought (as part of the policy development process) to what the indicators might be and whether data sources exist and how data collection might be handled.

8.3 Measuring The Performance Of A Policy

- Policy units sometimes express the view that developing indicators by which to measure progress in reaching policy objectives is rather impossible. How does one measure progress in areas such as inter-governmental cooperation, or stewardship in the management of the economy, environment, human health and social well-being? While it may be challenging to develop indictors to measure the performance of policies, it can nevertheless be done! The way to find

meaningful indicators is to go back to the problem/issue for which a policy was put in place.

- Policies exist either to ameliorate certain situations or to prevent the occurrence of certain outcomes. The root cause(s) of a policy provides the seeds of potential indicators by which to measure progress in achieving the policy objective. For example, if on-going negative media coverage of the interaction between any two levels of government leads to a policy of wanting to foster positive inter-governmental relations, then one indicator could be the type of media coverage in future.

- Another avenue for finding meaningful indicators for policy objectives is to look to the programs and initiatives through which policy is implemented. If certain programs or activities are being undertaken as a way to implement a policy, then measuring how well those are doing **may** reflect on the policy (i.e., if a program is not doing well, it may or may not mean the policy is the problem).

8.4 Tips On How To Manage Policy Evaluation With Limited Resources

Tip ☞ Think small! Be selective about:
- which policies to monitor and evaluate; and
- the number of performance indicators to use as measures of how well the policy is doing.

Tip ☞ As part of the policy development process, a determination needs to be made as to whether the policy or group of inter-related policies is going to be the subject of monitoring and evaluation. A checklist of general criteria needs to be developed to guide the process of determining which policies should be the subject of evaluation and monitoring. See **Section 8.5.**

Tip ☞ Be strategic in selecting performance indicators. Having numerous indicators is not necessarily a "good thing". It can also mean a lack of focus and a lack of clarity in the policy objectives or expected outcomes. If you can up with one or two critical indicators that track actual results achieved then you are doing well.

8.5 Criteria For Determining Which Policies To Monitor And Evaluate

Factors to include in your checklist of criteria include:

- level of funding that will be allocated to implementation of the policies;
- degree of risks associated with the policy (the following examples may be considered to have a level of risk that warrants performance measurement: policies relating to work place safety for construction workers; policies relating to water quality; policies relating to emergency hospital treatment protocols; policies relating to the reduction in motor vehicle fatalities, etc.);
- how widespread the impact of the policy is likely to be (how many groups are affected; in some cases while the numbers impacted are small the nature of the impact is potentially huge);
- the significance of the group(s) impacted (i.e., are there certain characteristics about the groups impacted that makes policy monitoring and evaluation important to undertake?);
- what is forgone if we don't monitor and evaluate?

8.6 The Challenge Of Selecting Performance Indicators

- Don't focus on all the inherent difficulties associated with selecting meaningful performance indicators. That can be crippling to creative thinking. For a change, making your starting point the shelving of the list of difficulties and constraints so you can "blue sky" unencumbered on potential indicators. Once you have brainstormed on a range of indicators, then assess the merits of each one in terms of feasibility and meaningfulness.

- If you need help in coming up with indicators, it is worth consulting:
  - the web site at www.ppx.ca, the Performance and Planning Exchange (PPX) which is a Canada-based international centre of excellence for learning, sharing and developing expertise in performance and planning including measurement, implementation, public reporting and management;
  - U.S. government agency annual "Performance Reports" which contain the indicators used in relation to various policy objectives (i.e., search the internet for the U.S. annual "Performance Report" that is relevant to your policy sector/department);
  - consult with other jurisdictions that have put in place policies similar to the ones you are considering.

8.7 Risks Associated With Not Monitoring And Evaluating Policies

- The risk associated with not undertaking performance measurement is that the misallocation of funds is potentially perpetuated (i.e., policies that may not be working optimally or that are no longer needed are continued).

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8.8 Questions To Ask Yourselves In Relation To Performance Measurement

- Have we determined whether the proposed policies will be the subject of performance measurement? See **Section 8.5.**

- Have we defined the problem/issue and the expected outcome of the proposed policies in such a way that we can measure performance of the policy solutions? See **Section 4** on Issue Identification.

- Have we identified potential performance indicators and do we have a general sense of how we are going to get our hands on the necessary data?

PART C – POLICY PRODUCT ATTRIBUTES

A policy product can be a written document or an oral presentation/briefing. As a document, the policy product can take a variety of forms. It can be a discussion paper, a white paper, a cabinet or treasury board submission, a briefing note, and so forth.

Our model of effective policy development includes six attributes that relate to the policy product:

- Section 9 - Purpose
- Section 10 - Evidence
- Section 11 - Options
- Section 12 - Logic
- Section 13 - Consultation
- Section 14 - Presentation.

For more information on each of these attributes, refer to the November 2001 Auditor General's Report entitled, *A Review of the Policy Development Capacity Within Government Departments* (available at www.oag.mb.ca).

Part C deals with each of the above listed attributes from the perspective of what policy analysts can do to ensure excellence in their policy products. Keep in mind that at different stages of the policy process, the type of policy product you put forward is likely to change depending on the audience being targeted and the stage in the process. For instance, policy proposals may be the subject of a cabinet submission at the early stage of the process and may be transformed at later stages of the process into speaking notes for the minister responsible if he/she has to deliver a speech on the proposed policies.

The Following Topics Are Covered In Part C:					
Section 9: Purpose		Section 10: Evidence		Section 11: Options	
9.1	Getting To The Heart Of The Matter	10.1	Back-Up What You Say	11.1	Presenting The Options
9.2	Tip On Effective Articulation Of The Purpose	10.2	Tip On Building A Case	11.2	Presenting A Comparison Of The Options
9.3	Risks Associated With Inadequate Explanation Of The Purpose	10.3	Acknowledging Data Gaps	11.3	Tips On Presenting Options
9.4	Questions To Ask Yourselves In Relation To Articulation Of The Purpose	10.4	Risks Associated With Inadequate Evidence	11.4	Risks Associated With Not Presenting Options
		10.5	Questions To Ask Yourselves In Relation To Evidence In A Policy Product	11.5	Questions To Ask Yourself In Relation To Presenting Options
Section 12: Logic		Section 13: Consultation		Section 14: Presentation	
12.1	A Building Block Approach To Logic	13.1	Don't Just Do It, Tell Us About It!	14.1	Brevity Is The Soul Of Wit!
12.2	Tips On Logic	13.2	Tip On Consultation	14.2	Tips On Presentation
12.3	Risks Associated With Not Having A Logical Policy Product	13.3	Risks Associated With Not Including Consultation In A Policy Product	14.3	Risks Associated With Inadequate Presentation
12.4	Questions To Ask Yourselves In Relation To Logic	13.4	Questions To Ask Yourselves In Relation To Reporting On Consultation	14.4	Questions To Ask Yourselves In Relation To Presentation

SECTION 9: PURPOSE

9.1 Getting To The Heart Of The Matter

- Using the information gathered from Issue Identification (**Section 4**) and Issue Analysis (**Section 5**) the starting point in a policy paper or presentation is essentially to provide a succinct description of:
  - the problem;
  - why the problem requires a policy response at this time; and
  - the desired outcomes from the policies being proposed.

9.2 Tip On Effective Articulation Of The Purpose

Tip ☞ Develop a template that works for you in describing the problem, its dimension and desired outcomes. The following model is one approach you might want to try out (the example in the table below is invented and is not based on actuality).

Model For Explaining The Purpose Of The Policy Paper	
Problem	Provide one or two sentences which define the problem. *Example* • The vacancy rate for low-income multiple dwelling units has averaged 1% between 1988 and 1990 in Winnipeg. (Low-income is defined by Statistics Canada as having an average annual household income of $14,000).
Reason For Bringing Problem Forward	Explain why this problem is being brought forward at this time. It could be a whole host of reasons including the persistence of the problem, its magnitude, legislative requirements, ministerial direction, central government direction, and so forth. *Example* • Ensuring the availability of affordable housing is enshrined in the provincial housing legislation. • The department of housing has monitored the above problem for the past three years and it would appear that it is not a temporary trend. Over the past three years the vacancy rate for low income multiple dwelling units has fluctuated between 1% and 1.6%.
Symptoms	List how the problem manifests itself. *Example* 1. Increased demand for low income multiple dwelling units. 2. Inadequate supply of low income multiple dwellings. 3. Increase in homelessness.

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Symptoms	List how the problem manifests itself. *Example* 1. Increased demand for low income multiple dwelling units. 2. Inadequate supply of low income multiple dwellings. 3. Increase in homelessness.

Model For Explaining The Purpose Of The Policy Paper	
Elaboration Of Symptoms	For each symptom listed, explain in specific terms what is happening and the impact of the symptom (i.e., why this is significant or why it matters). *Example* 1. *Increased Demand For Low Income Multiple Units* • The Rentalsman Office advised that over the three year period 1988 to 1990 there was a 30% increase in enquiries about where to find low income rental units and the difficulties in finding available units. • The non-profit shelters and temporary housing facilities in the City have collectively increased their annual intake over the three years by 35%. Moreover, 8 out of the 11 facilities indicated that they have lacked space on average 10% of the time annually over the three-year period. By contrast, over the period 1982 to 1987, the annual average rate of turning people away was 6%. • According to these facilities, the figures on increased demand do not include persons with mental illness who are no longer institutionalized. *Significance And Impact* • The recession, rate of unemployment and increased rural Manitoba migration to Winnipeg due to the economic downturn suggest that this problem will worsen over the next two to three years. Our economic analysis and forecasting indicate that if nothing is done to address the problem, the vacancy rate for low-income multiple dwelling will be between 1% and 0.5% over the next two to three years. You would continue as above with symptoms 2 and 3.
Context	Address questions such as: when did the problem/symptoms arise; what trends may have contributed to the problem; is the problem expected to be a long-term issue; are other geographic locations facing the same situation? *Example* • Historically Winnipeg has had a good supply of low income multiple dwelling units with an annual average vacancy rate of approximately 5% over the period 1970 to 1985. • There have been no low-income multiple housing starts since the termination of Federal funding incentives under program "X" in 1986. The Province's 50% contribution in the Federal program "X" ended with the termination of Federal funding. • The Province of Manitoba has a small program that supports the expansion of temporary shelters for low-income households. • Other provinces are facing a similar situation especially in Ontario and British Columbia where there is no funding support to shelters.
Desired Change (Outcome)	Be as specific as possible about the change that a policy response is expected to achieve. *Example* • To return the vacancy rate for low income multiple dwellings to its historical rate of 5% annually.

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Desired Change (Outcome)	Be as specific as possible about the change that a policy response is expected to achieve. *Example* • To return the vacancy rate for low income multiple dwellings to its historical rate of 5% annually.

9.3 Risks Associated With Inadequate Explanation Of The Purpose

- The risk associated with inadequate explanation of the purpose of the policy is misallocation of resources (i.e., not targeting the right problem).

9.4 Questions To Ask Yourselves In Relation To Articulation Of The Purpose

- Have we explained the purpose for which the policy paper or presentation is being brought forward at this time including all the elements identified under **Section 9.2**?

SECTION 10: EVIDENCE

10.1 Back-Up What You Say

- If there isn't enough of the *right* type of evidence in a policy product, decision-makers will often defer decision-making until more information is provided. One of the main reasons why policy papers/submissions keep coming back to a department for more work, is the need for additional information (i.e., evidence).

- You need to make a reasoned and persuasive case for the positions you are putting forward in the policy product. To do this, you need facts to substantiate your arguments and the proposed policy direction. Here is an example of the type of statement that needs backing-up with evidence:

> "investment in municipal infrastructure has declined over the past 20 years and much of the infrastructure such as regional streets, major sewer and water pipes are over 30 years old and are therefore reaching the end of their life".

- Let's examine what needs to be added to the above example by way of evidence through the Evidence Checklist table.

An Evidence Checklist	
What Evidence Is Missing?	**Why Should This Evidence Be Added?**
• Data on the amount of decline in financial investment in municipal infrastructure.	• To determine whether the decline in municipal investment is significant enough to explain the current condition of the infrastructure (i.e., whether the condition is primarily the result of less funding).
• What explains the decline in investment over the past 20 years?	• Relevant because it may contain the seeds of the solution (refer to **Section 4** on the significance of properly understanding the problem and its symptoms).
• Might there be other key reasons for the worsening condition of municipal infrastructure?	• Are we sure that financial investment is the only key factor contributing to the worsening condition of municipal infrastructure? (A key question as it relates to proper diagnosis of the problem and ultimately the potential policy solutions.)
• Data on the actual condition of each category of municipal infrastructure.	• Allows us to know the severity and magnitude of the problem and how much of the infrastructure, by type, is reaching a critical breaking point. • Given that resources are not limitless, this type of information helps in prioritizing which infrastructure may receive funding (if the recommendation is for some type of funding initiative) and which infrastructure needs to be upgraded or replaced first.
• Is there any evidence that we consider essential but that is not available to us?	• Decision-makers need to know if there are limitations to the information provided and the nature of the data constraints as well as the resources required to generate/obtain such data.

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• Is there any evidence that we consider essential but that is not available to us?	• Decision-makers need to know if there are limitations to the information provided and the nature of the data constraints as well as the resources required to generate/obtain such data.

10.2 Tip On Building A Case

Tip ☞ Having irrelevant evidence or non-essential information is as bad as having too little evidence. To find the proper balance, try using the table in **Section 10.1** to help you review the merits of the evidence in your policy paper or presentation. For each piece of data or information you plan to include, ask yourself, "why is it necessary to have this and what does it contribute to the overall understanding of the problem/issue"? Also ask yourself, "are there any key statements that have little or no evidence to back them up"? The idea would then be to eliminate whatever is not making a direct and meaningful contribution and to correct any identified data gaps wherever possible. See **Section 10.3.**

10.3 Acknowledging Data Gaps

- In those instances where important data is not attainable for one reason or another, the policy product should flag the information gaps. Moreover, the policy product should identify what resources would be needed to obtain key data. Ministers need to be made aware of the limitations of the information that is provided to them and the policy capacity constraints that a department may be facing. See **Section 3.2**.

10.4 Risks Associated With Inadequate Evidence

- The Risks associated with inadequate evidence in a policy product are:
  - an unreliable basis from which to develop policies; and
  - decision-making that is not evidence based.

10.5 Questions To Ask Yourselves In Relation To Evidence In A Policy Product

- If we were the ones having to make decisions on the strength of the evidence we have provided, would we feel that we had been given sufficiently compelling evidence to make those decisions?

- Have we reviewed our policy product to determine if each piece of data included is relevant (i.e., can we justify to ourself why it is essential to include)? See **Sections 10.1 and 10.2**.

- Have we identified data limitations or gaps? See **Section 10.3**.

SECTION 11: OPTIONS

11.1 Presenting The Options

- It is not enough to consider options as part of the policy development process. The options considered need to be shared in the policy product. To be comfortable in making a decision on a recommended policy direction, would you not want to know what other alternatives were considered and their relative merits?

- Some departments hold the view that it is redundant to include policy options in each iteration of a policy initiative that is in development. Their view is that once the minister responsible, cabinet or a committee of cabinet have decided on the policy option that they want to have developed for further discussion, there is no need to include in future policy papers/submissions all the options that were considered and rejected. In some instances this approach may be appropriate while in others it may not. Factors to consider are whether the decision to focus on a particular option was made at an oral briefing. If so, it is a good idea in the written policy paper/submission to cover what the options are that were rejected and why. This can be achieved in the briefest way especially if a table such as the one in **Section 11.2** is used. The options that were rejected can also be in an appendix to a policy paper/submission.

- Another argument that is sometimes heard as the reason for not including the policy options in a policy paper/submission is that the minister knows the subject area well and knows that options were considered and has decided to submit to cabinet his/her recommended policy solution. This is all well and good, however, when the minister is asked questions about various options, he/she cannot be expected to recall the various arguments and evidence that relates to the pros and cons of the rejected options. Thus, it is useful to include in a submission information on options so that the minister's colleagues who have not been involved at earlier stages of option selection know about the various alternatives that were considered.

11.2 Presenting A Comparison Of The Options

- To facilitate comparisons between options and ultimately decision-making on a course of action, the assessment criteria used to evaluate each option need to be identified and the findings from the assessment need to be presented in a policy product. A systematic approach to a comparison of options not only makes it easier for those on the receiving end of a policy product, but you will find that by working through the model below, it can also help you identify information gaps and gaps in logic (see **Section 12)**. The example that follows is a continuation of the housing scenario under **Section 9.2** (it is invented and not based on actuality).

Model For Presenting A Comparison Of Options

Description Of Options	Criteria 1 Cost Impact On Government	Criteria 2 Implementation Considerations	Criteria 3 Legal Considerations	Criteria 4 Receptiveness Of Stakeholders
Option 1 – Status Quo No Provincial participation in construction of low-income multiple units.	• No new costs incurred.	• Not applicable.	• Not consistent with legal responsibility to provide access to affordable housing.	• Does not address the rising problem documented above. • No available space within existing public housing to meet level of demand.
Option 2 – Provincial Funding Support To Non-Profits Provincial participation through a partnership approach with non-profit organizations.	• Proposed annual provincial funding of $2.00 M for two years. • To be funded from Housing's existing budget.	• No impact on Province because non-profits would construct and rent the units.	• Fulfills legal mandate.	• Non-profits were canvassed and they indicated a willingness to participate on a 50-50 basis.
Option 3 – Provincial Delivery Of Low-Income Units Provincial participation through direct delivery of new low-income units.	• Several sites are available at the outskirts of the City. • In an earlier decision Government directed the Department to sell these sites to a private sector developer. If the sites are developed as low income rental units, this will mean a financial cost to the Province in excess of the $2M in Option 2.	• Department of Housing does not have the necessary resources because it is phasing out its direct delivery services (to reduce administrative costs).	• Fulfills legal mandate.	• Although we have not canvassed clients, it is doubtful they would find the outskirts of the City suitable because bus service is limited and access to groceries and other services requires a car (generally, the client group do not have a car).

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11.3 Tips On Presenting Options

Tip ☞ Presenting the options does not have to be lengthy and detailed. In fact, a policy product should provide a *distillation* of the essence of the options and their merits.

Tip ☞ Be as consistent as possible in the format of presenting each option. This makes it easier for persons receiving the information to compare the options and more importantly to draw conclusions based on such comparisons. For example if you have discussed one option in terms of its legal feasibility, comment on that aspect in relation to each option.

Tip ☞ If you feel that it is necessary, in certain circumstances, to provide a fair amount of information about options then provide the details in an attachment.

11.4 Risks Associated With Not Presenting Options

- The risks associated with not presenting options in the policy product are:
  - uncertainty as to whether the most cost effective option is selected; and
  - uncertainty as to whether the option selected is the best one in relation to specific government objectives.

11.5 Questions To Ask Yourself In Relation To Presenting Options

- Did we present the options and the assessment of each option in such a way that the pros and cons of each are readily comparable by those who have to consider them? See **Section 11.2.**

- If we were making a decision based on our presentation of the options and their relative merits, would we find that the information we provided is adequate for us to make choices? If not, identify the additional evidence or explanations that need to be included to round out the picture (it may be that the "logic" needs strengthening). See **Section 12.**

SECTION 12: LOGIC

12.1 A Building Block Approach To Logic

- Logic is about:
  - the order in which you present the various points you want to make (i.e., sequencing); and
  - making a reasoned case (i.e., one can follow how you arrived at a particular conclusion or recommendation).

- The invented example below is typical of the type of gap in logic that is often found in policy papers:

> "Without incentives the eco-tourism sector will not reach targeted potential growth levels. Manitoba's varied habitats within easy access offer Manitoba a new economic growth opportunity. It is recommended that government develop a package of incentives for eco-tourism operators in Manitoba".

- There are big leaps in logic in the above example. Was a case made for the recommended incentives? Was evidence provided to substantiate the point that without incentives this sector will not meet its potential growth? Was evidence provided to persuade us of the economic worthwhileness of investing in this sector?

- As you can see, there is a close link between logic and evidence. The two go hand in hand. If you do not have evidence, it is unlikely you will have logic. On the other hand, if you have a logical policy paper, it is more likely that you will have done a good job of providing evidence.

12.2 Tips On Logic

Tip ☞ Approach logic as if you were constructing a building. In construction you start with the foundation, then the basement followed by the main floor and subsequent floors working your way up to the roof (logical sequencing). The plumbing and electric wiring are imbedded in the building before the walls go up. One would not for instance create the rooms and then insert the main wiring because that makes the job much more difficult and costly than it needs to be (reasoned case for the ordering of construction activities). Nor would one put in the windows before all the major construction activities are completed because there is risk of damaging the windows (reasoned case for the ordering of construction activities).

Tip ☞ If time permits, have an external reader review the policy product (i.e., someone from your department or another department who has not been involved in the particular policy initiative). Often our intimate knowledge of the policy area makes it more challenging to step back and identify gaps in logic. Someone who has

limited or no knowledge in the given subject area is therefore a perfect litmus test for determining logical flow of the material to be presented.

12.3 Risks Associated With Not Having A Logical Policy Product

- The risks associated with not having a logical policy product are:
  - that it can lead to indecisiveness in decision-making; and
  - that it can lead to confusion and vagueness which may result in a policy initiative being "kicked back" for further work, thus making the policy development process more time consuming and costly for all concerned.

12.4 Questions To Ask Yourselves In Relation To Logic

- Have we reviewed the policy product from the point of view of whether it logically hangs together and flows?

- Have we had an external reader review the policy product to determine if he/she can follow the logic of what we are trying to say? See **Section 12.2.**

SECTION 13: CONSULTATION

13.1 Don't Just Do It, Tell Us About It!

- A policy product should briefly document who was consulted, why they were consulted and their position or concern. This need not be lengthy. In fact, this type of information lends itself well to being in an attachment. Remember though, whether it is in an attachment or the main policy paper, you need to summarize the information.

- There is a tendency in policy papers to gloss over the consultations by simply identifying which groups were consulted and noting that the policy recommendations are consistent with the issues/concerns raised with those who were consulted. That approach is a little too brief! It is useful to know some of the nuances of the positions taken by those consulted. Providing a breakdown of the outcome of consultations with each group need not become overly detailed either.

- There needs to be a logical link between information gathered from consultations and the policy direction that is being recommended. It is not enough to just include the results of the consultation. You need to answer the "so what" for the person who receives the policy product.

13.2 Tip On Consultation

Tip ☞ Make sure that the policy product makes good use of the information gathered during consultations. Extract from the consultations any evidence that helps to explain the problem and its dimensions. If applicable, demonstrate in the policy product how the information from consultations makes a case for the type of policy response that is being recommended. If those consulted do not support the policy response being recommended, then the policy paper must flag this and explain the rationale for proposing what is expected to be an unpopular policy.

13.3 Risks Associated With Not Including Consultation In A Policy Product

- The main risk associated with not properly including the results of consultations is decision-making in the absence of knowing stakeholder/client reactions, preferences or likely response to the policy.

13.4 Questions To Ask Yourselves In Relation To Reporting On Consultation

- Did we identify all the persons/groups consulted and did we summarize the feedback from each person/group?

- If consultations took place in relation to potential policy solutions, does the policy product relate the findings from such consultations to the policy option being recommended?

SECTION 14: PRESENTATION

14.1 Brevity Is The Soul Of Wit!

- Don't overwhelm the reader or the persons being briefed with information. You may have collected far more information than what is appropriate to include in a policy product. Stay *focused on the absolute essentials* without which one would simply not grasp the nature of the problem. A few key facts are worth far more than mountains of background information.

- Use attachments judiciously. Don't include attachments simply on the basis that someone might be interested in their content. Likewise, don't treat attachments as a general "dump" of information, statistics and technical material. Each attachment should meet the test of the criteria here on the policy product. This means, converting the content of attachments into brief, clear, simply written documents that add value to the policy product. The person reviewing a policy product should be able to easily extract the relevance of each attachment.

14.2 Tips On Presentation

Tip ☞ Be creative in your presentation of the material. Make your presentations more inviting to review by making them more user-friendly (e.g., use tables, charts and diagrams). Make it easier for the reader to compare between options or to compare feedback from different stakeholders consulted by bringing the information together in a table. See for example **Sections 9.2**, **11.2** and **13.2.**

Tip ☞ If time permits, have an external reader review the policy product (i.e., someone from your department or another department who has not been involved in the particular policy initiative). Often our intimate knowledge of the policy area makes it more challenging to step back and identify if we have been as clear and concise as we could be in our presentation. Someone who has limited or no knowledge in the given subject area is therefore a perfect litmus test for determining if we have been brief and to the point without compromising comprehension of the material.

14.3 Risks Associated With Inadequate Presentation

- The main risk associated with inadequate presentation is inefficient use of time (i.e., taking up more time from senior government officials and members of government than is otherwise necessary to understand what policy advisors are attempting to communicate).

14.4 Questions To Ask Yourselves In Relation To Presentation

- If we had to make some policy decisions on this problem, what would we need to know in order to comfortably make decisions?

- Does the information in attachments, provide an important link to the main policy paper/submission?

- Is there anything in an attachment that ought to be in the main body of the policy paper?

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RELEVANT COURSES AVAILABLE THROUGH ORGANIZATION AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT (OSD), MANITOBA CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

Below is a listing and brief description of a few OSD courses that relate to various aspects of policy development.

Group Facilitation Skills (Relates to Section 1 of the Guide)

Description

The facilitator attends to the process of change. To facilitate is to elicit, sustain and enhance change to help others to accomplish what they want. Facilitating a meeting is to let go of controlling others toward predefined results and help the group accomplish what they want. This workshop is for managers, supervisors, directors, community specialists and anyone who facilitates groups or meetings.

Topics

The Focused Conversation Method:

- Provides a structure for clear dialogue and reflection.
- Probes beneath the surface.
- Encourages a diversity of perspectives.

Workshop Method:

- Engages the participation of each group member.
- Focuses the group's consensus.
- Builds an effective team partnership.
- Enables you to facilitate large groups.

Project Management - An Introduction (Relates to Section 1 of the Guide)

Description

This two-day workshop is designed to assist people with little or no project management experience to manage their own projects and to lead team projects.

Topics

- What are projects, project management and project managers.
- Know the destination: goals and objectives.
- Project terms of reference.
- Laying a route: work breakdown, structure, schedule, critical path and budget.
- The human side: resources, responsibilities and relationships.
- Making headway: controlling scope and reporting progress.
- Reaching the destination: pulling it all together.

Decision Making (Relates to Sections 4, 5 and 6 of the Guide)

Description

How to make decisions that are reasonable, supportable and minimize risk.

For those who have to make choices in a demanding work environment and would benefit from a proven model for picking the most suitable alternative.

Topics

- A comprehensive and effective process for making decisions.
- How to apply the decision making process to your work situation.
- The conditions that support good decision making practices in the workplace.

Consulting Skills (Relates to Section 7 of the Guide)

Description

How to manage the consulting relationship to ensure useful results are achieved and to resolve the "real" issues.

For those who act in an advisory or consulting capacity and help clients solve organization problems or implement change.

Topics

- Identify the strengths you bring to a consulting relationship.
- Clarify what clients need as opposed to what they want in order that you can provide a valuable service.
- Learn an effective process and the related techniques to increase the likelihood that your advice will be used.
- Increase your effectiveness in working with clients.
- Apply what you learn to a "back home" situation.

Focus Groups - Planning and Facilitation (Relates to Section 8 of the Guide)

Description

Discover an innovative way to gather quick, qualitative information about how your service or program is being received by your end user.

For employees involved in program measurement, program change or new implementation, providing products or services. Use the focus group method to ensure you are doing the right things right.

Topics

- Definition and Uses of Focus Groups.
- Qualitative Research.
- Steps in Focus Group Method.
- Conducting the Focus Group.
- Reporting the Findings.

The Art of Writing Effective Reports (Relates to Part C of the Guide)

Description

Does your anxiety level increase when you're faced with writing a report? Do you struggle with getting started and then second-guess yourself about structure and format? Eliminate those concerns and roadblocks; learn to write your reports efficiently and with confidence.

Topics

- Writing for the Reader
- The Writing Process
- Controlling Sentence Length
- Writing with Energy and Enthusiasm
- Camouflaged Verbs
- Active vs Passive Voice
- Controlling Paragraph Length
- Topic Sentences
- Creating Flow
- Characteristics of Effective Reports
- Formatting
- Parallel Structure
- Report Overview
- Word Watch
- Guidelines for Capitalization
- Guidelines for Writing Numbers
- The Apostrophe
- Subject and Object Pronouns
- Guidelines for Punctuation

Presentation Skills (Relates to Section 14 of the Guide)

Description

This two-day workshop is designed to help participants produce more effective presentations. Content of the course includes making presentations of various types to different types of audiences: including preparation, and delivery.

Topics

- Create your professional presentation.
- Define your objectives.
- Develop your opening and closing, and determine your content.
- Create visual aids and handouts.
- Make your presentation FUN.
- Communication styles.
- Controlling your presentation anxiety.
- Your body: make every move count.
- Delivering your presentation with POWER.
- Marking a script.

For further details about any of these workshops please call:
Karen Meelker at (204) 945-4911 or Jackie Desrochers at (204) 945-3190
Organization and Staff Development
Registration forms are available on line at
www.gov.mb.ca/csc/osd/registration/regforms.html

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Mission

To contribute to effective governance by the Manitoba Legislature, we provide the Members of the Legislative Assembly with independent assurance and advice on:

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IN INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Respect
Honesty
Integrity
Openness

IN ACHIEVING OUR VISION AND MISSION

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Balanced Perspectives
Professional Excellence

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